CLAIMS

Therefore, having thus described the invention, at least the following is claimed:

1. A system for preventing unauthorized use of an electronic device, comprising:

a security file corresponding to a predefined security code;

a memory residing in the electronic device and configured to store the security file;

a card key, the card key corresponding to the predefined security code;

a processor configured to compare the card key with the security file, and further configured to enable use of the electronic device only if the security file corresponds to the card key; and

a security timer configured to time a period of time such that the processor compares the card key with the security file after the time period has elapsed.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the card key resides in a portable memory module configured to couple to the electronic device and further configured to communicate the card key to the processor.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the card key is a backup card key and resides in a second memory, the second memory residing in a computer such that the card key is communicated from the second memory to the processor.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein the electronic device comprises at least one selected from a group consisting of a digital camera, a personal computer, a laptop computer and a personal digital assistant.

5. The system of claim 3, further comprising a means for prompting a user to communicate the card key to the electronic device.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the security timer is a hardware component coupled to the processor and configured to communicate a signal to the processor indicating that the time period has elapsed.

7. The system of claim 1, further comprising a unit of memory configured to store the security timer as logic such that the processor executes the security timer logic to time the time period.

8. The system of claim 1, further comprising a time adjuster configured to adjust the period of time timed by the security timer.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the time adjuster is at least one selected from a group consisting of at least one touch-sensitive button, at least one pushbutton, a touch pad display and a menu displayed on a display.

10. A method for providing security to an electronic device, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a card key, the card key corresponding to a predefined security code;

receiving a security key residing in a unit of memory within the electronic device, the security key corresponding to the predefined security code;

comparing the card key with the security key;

enabling the use of the electronic device only if the card key corresponds to the security key; and

timing a time period such that the steps of receiving, comparing and enabling are performed at the conclusion of the time period.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of disabling the electronic device when the card key does not correspond to the security key.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the electronic device comprises at least one selected from a group consisting of a digital camera, a personal computer, a laptop computer and a personal digital assistant.

13. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of prompting a user to communicate the card key to the electronic device.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of timing a time period further includes the steps of:

communicating the activation of the electronic device to a security timer; and

communicating the end of timing period to a processor such that the processor performs the steps of receiving, comparing and enabling.

15. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of timing further includes the steps of:

executing a security timer logic residing in a second unit of memory with a processor; and

beginning the steps of receiving, comparing and enabling when the time period has elapsed.

16. The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of adjusting the time period.

17. A program for preventing the unauthorized use of electronic equipment, the program comprising:

logic configured to prompt a user to provide a card key, the card key corresponding to a predefined password;

logic configured to retrieve the card key from a first memory;

logic configured to retrieve the security file from a second memory residing in the electronic equipment, the security file corresponding to the predefined password;

logic configured to determine whether the card key corresponds to the security file; and

logic configured to enable the use of the digital camera only when the card key corresponds to the security file.

18. The program of claim 17, further comprising:

logic configured to start a timer; and

logic configured to determine whether a predefined time period of the timer has expired such that the logic configured to determine whether the card key corresponds to the security file is executed when the predefined time period has elapsed.

19. The program of claim 17, further comprising logic configured to time a period of time such that the logic configured to enable the use of the digital camera is executed when the predefined time period has elapsed.

20. The program of claim 17, further comprising logic configured to receive a time adjustment communication such that the predefined time period is adjusted.

21. A system for preventing unauthorized use of an electronic device, comprising:

a security file corresponding to a predefined security code;

a memory residing in the electronic device and configured to store the security file;

a portable memory module having a card key, the card key corresponding to the predefined security code, and the portable memory module configured to store additional information received from the electronic device; and

a processor configured to compare the card key with the security file, and further configured to enable use of the electronic device only if the security file corresponds to the card key.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the portable memory module is configured to couple to the electronic device and further configured to communicate the card key to the processor.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the additional information residing in the portable memory module is information corresponding to a captured image

24. The system of claim 22, further comprising a security timer configured to time a period of time such that the processor compares the card key with the security file after the time period has elapsed.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein the security timer is a hardware component coupled to the processor and configured to communicate a signal to the processor indicating that the time period has elapsed.

26. The system of claim 24, further comprising a unit of memory configured to store the security timer as logic such that the processor executes the security timer logic to time the time period.

27. The system of claim 24, further comprising a time adjuster configured to adjust the period of time timed by the security timer.

28. The system of claim 24, wherein the time adjuster is at least one selected from a group consisting of at least one touch-sensitive button, at least one pushbutton, a touch pad display and a menu displayed on a display.

29. A method for providing security to an electronic device, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a portable memory module, the portable memory module having a card key corresponding to a predefined security code, and further configured to store additional information received from the electronic device;

communicating the card key from the portable memory module to the electronic device;

receiving a security key residing in a unit of memory within the electronic device, the security key corresponding to the predefined security code;

comparing the card key with the security key; and

enabling the use of the electronic device only if the card key corresponds to the security key.

30. The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of disabling the electronic device when the card key does not correspond to the security key.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the electronic device comprises at least one selected from a group consisting of a digital camera, a personal computer, a laptop computer and a personal digital assistant.

32. The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of timing a time period such that the steps of receiving, comparing and enabling are performed at the conclusion of the time period.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the step of timing the time period further includes the steps of:

communicating activation of the electronic device to a security timer; and

communicating end of timing period to a processor such that the processor performs the steps of receiving, comparing and enabling.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein the step of timing further includes the steps of:

executing a security timer logic residing in a second unit of memory with a processor; and

beginning the steps of receiving, comparing and enabling when the time period has elapsed.

35. The method of claim 32, further comprising the step of adjusting the time period.

36. The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of prompting a user to communicate the card key to the electronic device.